



What is the DD Council?

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) is a 21-member group appointed by the governor and empowered by federal law to advocate for people with developmental disabilities. The council has an exciting mission: “To support people with developmental disabilities to achieve life dreams.”

Congress created DD Councils – one in each state and territory - to change service systems to be more responsive to the needs, wants and desires of people with developmental disabilities. Councils help people create better lives for themselves by challenging the status quo in America.

The law that drives this commitment is the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act as amended in 2000. In part, it provides direction and control for DD councils across America.

A STRONG VOICE

The Council works to ensure that the voices of people with disabilities are heard. It speaks with them to the governor and other policy makers. It supports them in directing their own lives.

The DD Council works with its partners to create and sustain opportunities for housing, education, transportation, employment, health, recreation... nearly every experience of American life. Its outreach includes support for all families, recognizing diversity, and supporting grassroots advocacy.

Staying in touch with those who make policy and laws is very important. The Council informs people about the political process,

sponsors a legislative event, promotes voting and supports other activities to increase the political clout of people with developmental disabilities. The political process is the most powerful tool for change.

THREE WAYS TO MAKE CHANGES

The DD Council works through three main avenues to systems change: grants, RICCs, and advocacy.

1. Grants. This program has awarded over \$30 million since the early 1980s. All grants are for projects to carry out strategies written in the Council's Strategic Plan. A competitive "request for proposal" process is designed to bring in the proposals and select the projects that will achieve the results the Council seeks.

Over the years grants have funded an amazing variety of projects and studies. Projects funded more than 20 years ago started programs, or made changes that still improve lives and systems! Grant projects support the efforts of people to direct their own lives and to live, work and contribute to their communities.

2. RICCs. Regional Interagency Consumer Committees are local grassroots organizations. Historically RICCs have had three main functions: (1) to provide a forum for addressing local issues; (2) to advocate for needed changes in the community and (3) to inform the DD Council about local conditions for persons with developmental disabilities. Each RICC member works with the group to make his or her community more accessible for everyone. Any person living in the community may become a RICC member.

3. Advocacy. The Council educates policy makers to get policy, law or systems changed to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities. Advocacy involves teamwork and communication. The Council combines its resources and talents with those of other groups and individuals to work toward common goals.

COLLABORATORS, WORK GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

The Council's collaborators include people with disabilities, parents, advocates, professionals and grassroots activists. The Council works to get more people involved in systems change through its RICCs, work groups and committees. People with disabilities and other

advocates eager to make a difference are asked to contact the Council office.

Council members, consumers and other advocates serve on Council committees and work groups, such as the Transportation Work Group and the Multicultural Committee. Each work group focuses on one major system change issue, such as family support, education, health, or housing. The committees (Public Policy, Program and Multicultural) address wide-ranging issues. These groups provide ideas for projects, team up with other advocacy groups to make a broader impact, and advise the Council on trends and changes in systems and the laws that control them.

GET INVOLVED!

“The Vision of the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council is that all citizens of Michigan have the opportunities and supports to achieve their full potential.” The Council is a dynamic force for change. You can become part of making the vision a reality. Get involved!

For more information, please contact the DD Council by phone – 517-334-6123, by TDD – 517-334-7354. Our address is: 1033 S. Washington Ave., Lansing, MI 48910. Our website is: www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil.

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OUR COMMUNITY INCLUDES EVERYONE !